

THE LIFE SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Dec 98 Edition Tommy Tompkins and Bob McElwain, Reporters

Want to start this issue with warmest regards for the Holiday Season and to wish the best to all and families. This extended Life Support Family has really grown this last year and we have been through some good times and also some downers. Chili reports on some that have had medical problems and asks for words of encouragement to them. I have the duty of letting everyone know of the passing of Chief "Coop" Cooper. I have included the fine words of Chief Les "MO" Davy as a tribute:

"There was a good turnout at Coop's memorial service at Robins AFB, GA and the funeral in Chattanooga. He would have been proud to see the "blue suitors" proudly saluting the Chief's departure. I had an opportunity to talk to his family members and let them know what an honor it was to serve with such a great man and how much he was loved by his "other family". A few of us gathered at the graveside after everyone else left and had a farewell toast of cold beer and good whiskey with Coop to lend our final salute. We shed too many tears to mention, and before we left, we promised not to dwell on the "why", but to give thanks for the many good memories we have of a true "Chief" and great friend."

I had a nice conversation with Chief Mac McGee. Mac is doing good retired in MS. He was really pleased but not surprised to find out that Todd Nelson had make Chief this cycle. Todd had really done some fine work at Wright-Patterson for Mac. Don't believe that the 4950th ever had any inspection results but excellent and above while Todd was there. The other two Chief selectees this cycle were Dave Chitwood who is on the ACC IG Team with Chief Al Cricks and Bryan "Beetle" Bailey who is at HQ PACAF with Chief Gary Winchester. Congratulations to All! Not sure of whom they are replacing but do know that Chief Joe Lynch and Chief Chuck Hunnefeld are getting SHORT! There will be some moves shortly I think!

Retired Chief Dennis Struck has left AMC Requirements and is now at Randolph in a Logistics Career Enhancement Position. Good Luck Dennis! Dennis's position at AMC has not yet been filled but understand that the AMC Life Support Staff and specifically SMS Ken Rennie will be working the Requirements/funding from the Ops side until a replacement is identified. John Patti has been real busy over the year with his AFJROTC students and building a new house that they hope to move into before Christmas. Good Luck JP.

As I read through the December issue of "Sergeants" Magazine I ran across a picture of one of our own, "MSGT Willard Oost " who is the Chief of Police for Parker, Florida. Willard was assisting CMSAF Paul Airey in making an AFSA Chapter 553 presentation. I know there is more happening out there to all. Both Chili and I need your inputs to make these newsletters interesting and informative. Keep the e-mails and cards and letters coming. Remember it's your newsletter and we need your inputs. Cheers and Keep in Touch.

Tommy

CHILI SEZ

Greetings and happy holidays to all. I'm starting out with news on some people who could use our prayers as the year-ends. They have all been under the knife in 1998 and are home recuperating. Below are quotes from e-mails that I received from them regarding their health.

*"I'm setting here at home recouping from open heart surgery and thought it would be a good idea to let all my old friends from life support know that I am still kicking. This past December I accepted a new job as a Technical Team Leader and Team Facilitator in Chattanooga, TN. I guess the new job put more stress on me than I admitted. I had been having chest pains off and on since March and had been to the emergency room 3 time since then. My last visit to the emergency room was 27 Jun, which resulted in open-heart surgery (4 by pass). I have been home since the 1st of July. If all goes well I will be able to go back to work around the middle of August. I was planning on attending the reunion this year but by the time I get back to work I will not have any vacation time left. Please let everyone know that I would have liked to have been there and plan on attending next year." **Ray Turbyfill, July 98***

*"I received your "get well" card and would like you to know how much I appreciate it! These are the things, which help my recovery process so much. The open-heart surgery and subsequent complications have taken their toll and sapped my energy enormously. I was in ICU 4 times, lost 10 pounds of my weight, but now I am finally home and starting to work seriously on getting well again. Thanks again for your and the "Life Support Retirees" wishes, they go a long way to getting well for me." **Tony VanHaastert, Gentex Corp, Nov 98***

*I'm told that **Billy Grimsley** has also had open-heart surgery, three times! He's currently waiting for a heart donor. We are pulling for all you guys. Hope to see you all again at a future reunion.*

Another E-Mail of Interest

At present the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory is in the middle of another expansion, as we prepare to take on the Korean War Accountability Mission (using life sciences equipment to try and account for our missing personnel). As such I am currently finishing off the manning documents for the new people who will be coming on board at about the same time as the reunion, so I will not be able to make it. Similarly, my Senior Equipment Analyst will be in the People's Republic of China during that period, working the recovery of a USAAF B-24 crew, who crashed in the mountains while heading for a bombing mission during World War II. In short, I do not anticipate us being able to attend to do a presentation this year. Next year however, should be quieter, when I (hopefully will) have everything up and running, and the new people on board and trained by my current crew. So, please do not give up on us. I do

however, wish you all the very best for the upcoming reunion. Mike Grost, Chief, Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory, Jul 98

Other news includes a change of jobs for a couple of guys. SMSgt Richard Jordan retired back in July 98 and is now working as a Youth Corrections Officer for the state of Arizona. Mike Rossmiller is working for Lear Siegler Services, Inc in Saudi Arabia. Jim Chief Brookhouser wrote that he's handing over his pecan farm chores to his grandson next year so that he and his wife can make it to the reunion.

Profile of the Life Support Retirees Group

There are 400 names on our address list, a large percentage of which are retired or were discharged in Texas, California, or Florida. Fifty- five live in Texas, fifty- one live in California, forty- one live in Florida, twenty live in Ohio. Seventeen of us live in Nevada and Virginia. Sixteen live in Illinois, fourteen live in Arizona, New Mexico, and Washington. Twelve live in Georgia and North Carolina. There are ten living in Pennsylvania, nine in Oklahoma and South Carolina. Seven of us are residing over seas. The remaining members live in 28 other states. Upon discharge or retirement many of us started "second careers," some in real estate, farming, medicine, law enforcement, education, clergy, sales, legal, self-employment, volunteerism and others. We are proud of those who have been successful in their second and third careers, and we are equally as proud of our many members in their "volunteerism". A large number give of their time to the many service organizations (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and Former Prisoners of Wars and others), and assistance to our veterans and their spouses in need. Others provide volunteer time to local hospitals, libraries and VA Medical Centers, make visits to local schools and colleges for talks on career day and patriotic events, and contribute to local community endeavors such as Red Cross blood drives, United Way and others. There is something special about our group and our reunions. When life support people get together we all have so much to share, from the past and present!

I'd like to close by including a story about a court-martial that happened at a base that I (along with many of you) was stationed at. Hope you enjoy it, see you next year.

Bob

The Court-Martial

In '68-'69 time frame, Col. Vermont Garrison, of WW 11 and Korean fame (and one neat dude), was the Wing CO at Perrin AFB, TX. Perrin was the ADC interceptor-training base. It also had a squadron of Tweets (T-37 PIT) and hosted the ADC Water Survival Training Course at Lake Texoma.

One Sunday night, two ANG captains TDY to the Water Survival Course succeeded in painting their unit insignia (an Indian head as I remember) on every airplane on the base. No small chore, as there were 80+ F-102s, 50+ T-33s, 30+ T-37s and assorted transients (including Chuck Yeager's F-104 from Edwards). The culprits were quickly apprehended as they used lots of red paint and left a trail right to their VOQ rooms. The deed was the talk of the base on Monday morning.

About noon on Monday, the word came down that all flying was suspended for the day, and that there was a mandatory meeting of all officers at the O'Club at 1400. Arriving at the O'Club, we found it set up as a courtroom. Sure enough, an official court-martial was convened, with the two ANG captains as defendants. The two captains were in Class A Blues, looking sheepish and a bit hung over. Col. Garrison was the Board President. After about an hour of testimony, the board adjourned to consider a verdict. It was pretty cut and dried -- both guys still had dried paint on them. The board was back in about five minutes and announced both parties "Guilty as Charged." Most of us had a sick feeling in our stomachs and you could hear a pin drop as Col. Garrison rose to pass sentence. He proceed to smile and say that the proceedings were a sham and that the captains would have no official conviction placed in their records. However, they were obligated to "open the bar for the rest of the evening." There was an immediate race to the bar led by Garrison and his board. A wild party ensued. The happiest (and drunkest) guys there were two ANG captains with red paint on their hands.

Vermont Garrison ranks right up there with Olds and Chappie James and a few others. They hardly make 'em like that anymore!

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